

Savannah H. Finver

(551) 486-3503

finver.1@osu.edu

www.savannahfinver.com

Dept. of Comparative Studies
The Ohio State University
451 Hagerty Hall
1775 S. College Rd., Columbus, OH 43210

Education

The Ohio State University

Ph.D.: Comparative Studies, expected 2025

Supervisor: Dr. Isaac Weiner

The University of Alabama

M.A.: Religion in Culture, May 2020

Thesis: "The Politics of Classification: Religious Freedom and New Religions in the Contemporary United States"

Supervisor: Dr. Vaia Touna

GPA: 4.0

Graduate Certifications:

Digital Humanities (Alabama Digital Humanities Center)

Online Pedagogy (College of Continuing Studies)

St. Thomas Aquinas College

B.A. (*summa cum laude*), May 2016

Majors: Philosophy/Religious Studies, English

Minor: Childhood/Special Education, Grades 1-6

GPA: 3.93

Undergraduate Seminar Thesis: "The Problem of the Self: Individualism and Identity Crisis in Modern Literature" (English)

Supervisors: Dr. Robert Murray, Dr. Craig Martin

Areas of Academic Research and Interest

New Religious Movements, Contemporary Religions, American Religious History, Judaism in America, Protestantism and Religion, American Politics and Political Theory, Constitutional Law, Criminal Law, Legal Theory, Sociology of Religions, Philosophy of Religions, Religion and Literature, Discourse and Rhetorical Analysis

Publications

Book Chapters:

“But is it Really Religion?” in Jason W.M. Ellsworth & Andie Alexander (eds.), *Fabricating Authenticity* (Under Contract) (Forthcoming with Equinox Publishing).

“On Conceptual Anachronism” with Dr. Craig Martin in Gerhard van den Heever (ed.), *Special Selections on Religion in Antiquity* (Accepted) (Forthcoming with Equinox Publishing).

Book Reviews:

Savannah Finver (2019). Review of *The third disestablishment: church, state, & American culture, 1940-1975*, by Steven K. Green, Religion, DOI: 10.1080/0048721X.2019.1673073

Savannah Finver (2019). Review of *From politics to the pews: how partisanship and the political environment shape religious identity*, by Michele F. Margolis, Religious Studies Review.

Savannah Finver (2019). Review of *Our non-Christian nation: how atheists, Satanists, pagans, and others are demanding their rightful place in public life*, by Jay Wexler, Religious Studies Review.

Blog Posts:

“The Religious Is the Political.” *Studying Religion in Culture*. [June 26, 2020]
(<https://religion.ua.edu/blog/2020/06/26/the-religious-is-the-political/>)

“On Modern Retellings.” *Religious Studies and Social Theory: Foundations*. [November 15, 2018]
(<https://blogs.religion.ua.edu/rel501/2018/11/15/on-modern-retellings/#more-223>)

“Selective Storytelling.” *Religious Studies and Social Theory: Foundations*. [November 14, 2015]
(<https://blogs.religion.ua.edu/rel501/2018/11/14/selective-storytelling/>)

“A Glimpse into Academia: My Conference Experience in Atlanta, Georgia.” *Studying Religion in Culture*. [December 11, 2015]
(<https://religion.ua.edu/blog/2015/12/11/a-glimpse-into-academia-my-conference-experience-in-atlanta-georgia/>)

“In the Currents of Change.” *Studying Religion in Culture*. [January 23, 2014]
(<https://religion.ua.edu/blog/2014/01/23/in-the-currents-of-change/>)

Newspaper Articles

“To Warn or Not to Warn: On the Importance of Trigger Warnings.” Printed in the Thoma Student Newspaper, St. Thomas Aquinas College. [September 6, 2015]

“Put Your Best Foot Forward.” Printed in the Thoma Student Newspaper, St. Thomas Aquinas College. [November 6, 2014]

“Celebrating the Arts: Tom Chapin and Others Come to STAC.” Printed in the Thoma Student Newspaper, St. Thomas Aquinas College. [October 15, 2014]

“Remember to Remember: September 11, 2001.” Printed in the Thoma Student Newspaper, St. Thomas Aquinas College. [October 15, 2014]

Conference Presentations

International

“With Liberty and Justice for All: On Scholarly Positionality and Religion in U.S. Public Life.” Show Me Your Data: NAASR Annual Conference. Invited. (November 21, 2020)

“On Conceptual Anachronism.” With Dr. Craig Martin at AAR (American Academy of Religion) conference in San Antonio. (November 19, 2016)

Local

“(De)constructing the Devil: Scholarship on Cults and New Religions in America.” Examining the American Experience: 2019 Cultural Studies Graduate Conference at the University of Alabama. (October 3, 2019)

“Of Scholars and Metatheory: An Examination of the Role of Method and Theory in the Study of Religion.” (Poster Presentation). STAC Ignite: 1st Annual Art, Design, & Scholarship Exhibition. (April 25, 2016)

“If They Get One, We Want One, Too: An Analysis of the Installation of a Ten Commandments Monument in Oklahoma.” Undergraduate Conference on Religion and Culture at Syracuse University. (March 28, 2014)

Professional Podcasts

Appearances:

Pérez, Elizabeth and Savannah H. Finver. 2020. “Kitchens and Constructions of Religious Subjectivity in Black Atlantic Traditions”, The Religious Studies Project. 2 November 2020.

Robertson, David, Meagan Goodwin, Jonathon O’Donnell, and Savannah H. Finver. “The Roots of QAnon: Discourse! August 2020”, The Religious Studies Project. 31 August 2020.

Cotter, Christopher, Chris Silver, and Savannah Finver. “Discourse! April 2020”, The Religious Studies Project. 20 April 2020.

Finver, Savannah, Candace Mixon, and Suzanne Newcombe. “Discourse! January 2021”, The Religious Studies Project. 25 Jan. 2021.

Transcriptions:

Cristina Rocha. 2020. “Global Flows, Local Contexts: Pentecostalism in Australia”, *The*

Religious Studies Project. Podcast Transcript. 16 Nov. 2020. Transcribed by Savannah H. Finver. Version 1.0, 16 Nov. 2020. Available at: <https://www.religiousstudiesproject.com/podcast/global-flows-local-contexts-pentecostalism-in-australia/>

Gretel Van Wieren. 2020. “Climate Change(s): New Approaches to Environmental and Agricultural Ethics”, *The Religious Studies Project*. Podcast Transcript. 12 Oct. 2020. Transcribed by Savannah H. Finver. Version 2.0, 12 Oct. 2020. Available at: <https://www.religiousstudiesproject.com/podcast/climate-changes-new-approaches-to-environmental-and-agricultural-ethics/>

J. Lorand Matory. 2020. “The Fetish Revisited: Objects, Hierarchies, and BDSM with J. Lorand Matory”, *The Religious Studies Project*. Podcast Transcript. 21 Sept. 2020. Transcribed by Savannah H. Finver. Version 1.0, 21 Sept. 2020. Available at: <https://www.religiousstudiesproject.com/transcript/the-fetish-revisited-objects-hierarchies-and-bdsm-with-j-lorand-matory-transcript/>

Christopher R. Cotter and Breann Fallon. 2020. “Developing a Critical Study of Non-Religion”, *The Religious Studies Project*. Podcast Transcript. 23 August 2020. Transcribed by Savannah H. Finver. Version 1.0, 23 August 2020. Available at: <https://www.religiousstudiesproject.com/podcast/developing-a-critical-study-of-non-religion/>

Teaching Experience

Fall 2020-Spring 2021 – Graduate Teaching Associate
COMPSTD1100: Introduction to the Humanities
Supervising Instructor: Elizabeth Marsch Vu

*Duties included: Supervising a recitation section, grading, hold office hour, assist students with assignments and course content, maintain class blog

Summer 2020 – Online Grader/Instructor of Record
REL100: Introduction to Religious Studies
Mentor: Dr. Nathan Loewen

*Duties included: Communicating regularly with students regarding course content, grade student assignments, field student questions, prepare extra credit assignments

Spring 2020 – Graduate Teaching Assistant
REL100: Introduction to Religious Studies
Supervising Instructor: Dr. Edith Szanto

*Duties Included: Grading, hold office hour, host test review for students

Fall 2019 – Graduate Teaching Assistant
REL100: Introduction to Religious Studies
Supervising Instructor: Dr. Vaia Touna

*Duties Included: Grading, hold office hour, review with students prior to tests

Summer 2019 – Online Grader/Instructor of Record

REL105: Religion in the Media

Mentor: Dr. Mary-Rebecca Read-Wahidi

*Duties Included: Communicating regularly with students regarding course content, grade student assignments, field student questions, prepare extra credit assignments

Spring 2019 – Graduate Teaching Assistant

REL 105: Introduction to Religious Studies (Honors)

Supervising Instructor: Emily Crews

*Duties Included: Guest lecture, grading, hold office hour

Fall 2018 – Graduate Teaching Assistant

REL100: Introduction to Religious Studies

Supervising Instructor: Dr. Russell T. McCutcheon

*Duties Included: Guest lecture, grading, hold office hour, answer student emails

Class Lectures

The University of Alabama

“Classification Applied: “Religion” vs. “Cult.” Course Lecture in REL100: Introduction to Religious Studies. Supervising Instructor: Vaia Touna. (December 3, 2019)

“The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion.” Course Lecture in REL105: Introduction to Religious Studies (Honors). Supervising Instructor: Emily Crews. (March 19, 2019)

“A Review of Essentialism.” Course Lecture in REL105: Introduction to Religious Studies (Honors). Supervising Instructor: Emily Crews. (February 19, 2019)

“Is a Cult a Religion?” Course Lecture in REL105: Introduction to Religious Studies (Honors). Supervising Instructor: Emily Crews. (February 7, 2019)

“Classification Matters.” Course Lecture in REL100: Introduction to Religious Studies. Supervising Instructor: Dr. Russell T. McCutcheon. (October 9, 2018)

“Is It Really About Religion?: *Church of Lukumi Bablu Aye v. The City of Hialeah* (1993).” Course Lecture in REL 100: Introduction to Religious Studies. Supervising Instructor: Dr. Russell T. McCutcheon. (December 4, 2018)

Awards and Achievements

The Ohio State University

Teaching Associateship: Fall 2020 – Spring 2021

- Full tuition scholarship and stipend

The University of Alabama

Teaching Assistantship: Fall 2019 – Spring 2020

- Full tuition scholarship and stipend

Graduate Fellowship Award: Fall 2018 – Spring 2019

- Full tuition scholarship and stipend in the amount of \$15,000 for the year

Partial Teaching Assistantship: Fall 2018 – Spring 2019

- Partial stipend

St. Thomas Aquinas College

STAC Presidential Scholarship Fall 2012 – Spring 2016

- Full tuition scholarship for all four years of attendance

Invited Member of Sigma Tau Delta (English Honor Society)

Invited Member of Alpha Chi (National College Honor Society)

Academic Experience / Professional Service

General Experience/Service:

November 2020-Present – Executive Council Member for the North American Association for the Study of Religion

Attend all Executive Council meetings relative to the organization. Vote on organization policy and bylaws. Assist in online expansion of the organization and execution of the Annual Meeting for all members.

Fall 2020-Present – Transcript Editor, Features Editor, Interviewer at The Religious Studies Project

Serve as member of the Executive Board. Prepare and host interviews with colleagues in Religious Studies. Edit transcripts for podcasts. Host Discourse episodes. Solicit and edit written responses to podcasts.

The Ohio State University

Spring 2021-Present – Graduate Representative for the OSU Center for the Study of Religion

Serve as a member of the oversight committee for the CSR and provide feedback and assistance for event planning.

Fall 2020-Present – Participant in Religion & Law Reading Group

Prepare reading for discussion with colleagues on the topic of Religion & Law biweekly throughout the semester.

The University of Alabama

Fall 2019-Spring 2020 – Graduate Student Association Department Representative

Serve on Professional Development and Academic Development Committees and represent the Religious Studies Department at town hall meetings.

Summer 2019 – eTech Student Worker

Assist eTech Department in the Faculty Resource Center with UA's Accessibility Initiative. Update WordPress sites to reflect accessibility guidelines.

Spring 2019 – American Examples Volunteer

Assisted Dr. Michael J. Altman with airport pickup of participants as well as hosting participants throughout the conference.

Fall 2018-Spring 2020 – Participant in Social Theory Journal Group

Engage in discussion regarding relevant research in the field with other MA students and faculty twice per semester. Lead one discussion during the second year.

Fall 2018-Spring 2020 – Member of the Religious Studies Student Association

Assist with undergraduate and graduate recruitment to the Department of Religious Studies.

St. Thomas Aquinas College

Fall 2014-May 2016 – Copy Editor of the Thoma (Student Newspaper)

Read and edited for print all articles submitted for publication. Reviewed all articles for proper formatting, grammar, and citations. Provided any required assistance to the Editor-in-Chief in preparing and distributing all issues.

Fall 2015-Spring 2016 – President, Alpha Phi Omega

Prepared, hosted, and organized weekly meetings for members and bi-weekly meetings for all staff. Supervised all staff in the execution of their duties. Prepared, hosted, and organized Section 97 Annual Sectional Conference (including preparing locations for relevant presentations, courses, and meetings) under the supervision of the Section Chair. [March 28, 2015]

Fall 2014-Spring 2015 – New Member Educator, Alpha Phi Omega

Prepared a comprehensive curriculum regarding the history and principles of the Organization for incoming members to master. Prepared 1.5-hour weekly lectures. Prepared and graded basic assessments. Acted as mentor to all incoming members of the Organization to ensure all requirements for membership were met.

Digital Skills and Proficiencies

WordPress

Omeka

Garage Band: Podcasting

iMovie: Video Editing

HTML, HTML 5

CSS

Working knowledge of Python
WCAG 2.0 Accessibility Guidelines and Standards
Level Access
Trello Workboards
Otter AI
Carmen Canvas
Blackboard

Additional Work Experience

June 2017-June 2018: Legal Assistant for RAS Citron

Worked for the Service Department in editing, writing, and compiling all relevant paperwork to be submitted to the local court as Proofs of Service. Answered phone calls to the department as necessary.

December 2013-January 2017: Teaching Assistant for JCC Rockland

Assisted Lead Teachers in preparing and effectuating curriculum for children aged 6-weeks through 5-years. Attended the basic needs of young children. Maintained positive communication with parents regarding learning goals and outcomes.

Relevant Coursework & Projects

The Ohio State University

CS6300: Critical Foundations in Social Theory (Fall 2020)

Instructor: Philip Armstrong

Project: "With Liberty and Justice for All: On Scholarly Positionality and Religion in U.S. Public Life;" Research Paper and Conference Presentation

CS7630: Theorizing Culture (Fall 2020)

Instructor: Morgan Liu

Project: "The Limits of the Universal: 'Religion' and its Analytical Utility;" Research Paper

The University of Alabama

REL501: Religious Studies and Social Theories: Foundations (Fall 2018)

Instructor: Dr. Steven Ramey

Project: "The Trouble with Cults;" Research Paper

REL502: Digital Humanities (Fall 2018)

Instructors: Dr. Michael Altman, Dr. Nathan Loewen

Projects: "Religious Texts" (Explainer Video); "Blessed are the Cheesemakers" (Podcast); "Confronting the Bizarre" (Digital Archive)

REL504-001: Religious Studies: History, Field, Discipline (Spring 2019)

Instructor: Dr. Richard Newton

Project: “‘Freedom’ of ‘Religion’: The Study of Religious Freedom Rhetoric in the Field of Religious Studies;” Research Paper

REL504-002: Religion and Politics in America (Spring 2019)

Instructor: Dr. Michael Altman

Project: “The Legacy of the American Experiment: Toward a Theory of the Connection Between Protestantism and American Nationalism;” Research Paper

REL 560: Independent Study in New Religious Movements (Spring 2019)

Instructor: Vaia Touna

Project: “Framing Otherness: On the Classification and Construction of the New Religious Other;” Research Paper

REL 504-001: Debates in Method and Theory

Instructor: Russell T. McCutcheon

Project: *Religion, Theory, Critique: Classic and Contemporary Approaches and Methodology*, Richard King (ed.) Review

REL 560: Independent Study and Thesis Preparation

Instructor: Vaia Touna

Project: “The Social Impacts of Classification: On the Utility of Flexible Signifiers in Scholarship on Cults and New Religions in America”

St. Thomas Aquinas College

RELS

- 103: Hebrew Bible | 215: Religion and Capitalism | 221: Religions of the East | 300: Politics, Religion, and Political Philosophy (Honors) | 309: Religion, Gender, and Social Justice | 312: Evolution of Jesus | 400: Theories of Religion | 400: Independent Study – Derrida

SOC

- 300: Community and Identity (Honors)

PHIL

- 101: Intro to Philosophy | 107: Philosophy of the Modern Era | PHIL109: History of Ethics

Language Competencies

Basic reading proficiency in Spanish.

Minor reading proficiency in German.

Some conversational knowledge of Hebrew.

Professional Organizations:

American Academy of Religion (AAR)

Society of Biblical Literature (SBL)
North American Association for the Study of Religion (NAASR)
The Religious Studies Project (RSP)

References:

Isaac Weiner
Associate Professor of Comparative Studies
Associate Director, Center for the Study of Religion
The Ohio State University
weiner.141@osu.edu
(614) 688-4032

Vaia Touna
Assistant Professor of Religious Studies
The University of Alabama
vaia.touna@ua.edu
(205) 348-4617

Michael Altman
Associate Professor of Religious Studies
The University of Alabama
michael.altman@ua.edu
(205) 348-7223

Emily Crews
Instructor of Religious Studies
The University of Alabama
ecrews1@ua.edu
(205) 348-8685

Steven Ramey
Professor of Religious Studies
The University of Alabama
steven.ramey@ua.edu
(205) 348-4218

Craig Martin
Associate Professor of Religious Studies
St. Thomas Aquinas College
cmartin@stac.edu
(845) 398-4189